

**EMPIRE VILLAGE PLANNING COMMISSION
PUBLIC HEARING AND REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, JUNE 1, 2021**

The Empire Village Planning Commission (PC) held a public hearing and regular meeting on Tuesday, June 1, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. This meeting was conducted virtually (Zoom) due to health concerns surrounding COVID-19 under a Local State of Emergency declared by President Davis as authorized by Village Ordinance No. 156.

Schous opened the hearing at 7:00 p.m.

PUBLIC HEARING ON ZONING ORDINANCE SECTION 3.09 FENCES

Karen Baja stated that she does not see the need for this ordinance and views it as over restrictive and unnecessary. March Dye appreciated the effort put into the draft. Terry Bacon commented on vegetation screens in the proposed Fence Ordinance amendment.

Schous closed the public hearing and opened the regular meeting at 7:10pm

ROLL CALL –Maggie Bacon, John Collins, Bob Chase, Phil Deering, Peter Schous, John Lambkin and Chris Webb present. Planner, Chris Grobbel, also present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Motion by Bacon, supported by Webb to approve May 4, 2021 regular meeting minutes as presented. Schous asked that the second bullet in Wayfinding Issues (Transportation Plan) be struck. **All in favor, MOTION PASSED.**

TREASURER’S REPORT – Webb summarized the PC Expenditure Report for period ending 05/31/2021. 15.1 % of the planning commission budget has been used year to date with \$15,194.72 remaining.

ADDITIONS/CHANGES TO THE AGENDA – None.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST – None.

PUBLIC COMMENTS & CORRESPONDENCE – Terry Bacon commented on vegetation screens (fences) and line of sight at streets, fencing abutting the water’s edge, and the fence definition.

ZONING ADMINISTRATOR’S REPORT – Grobbel has approved an enclosed porch, Storm Hill commons area permit for decking and a fence, a Storm Hill lot split and a shed in the New Neighborhood.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Zoning Ordinance Section 3.09 Fences

PC Members discussed concerns brought up in the public hearing and made the following changes.

- 1) Remove living fence from the definition.
- 2) Remove the following sentence from the definition and add it to the end of A. Scrap wood, tires, tires or containers with rammed earth, or similar materials shall not be used as a fence.
- 3) B. 2. Front yard fences ~~(including on consisting, in whole or in part, of a vegetation screen)~~ shall be limited to four (4) feet in height at final grade with the front not extending beyond the lot

line. Front yard fences shall possess transparency or “see through” character of not less than 50%.

Motion by Bacon, supported by Chase to approve ZO Ordinance Section 3.09 Fence amendments to include changes made at tonight’s meeting and forward to Village Council for consideration. All in favor, MOTION PASSED.

Transportation Plan

Trails

New language for the 2nd trails paragraph:

The Village of Empire is fortunate to be located in an area that is central to a number of trail systems. The Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore is located to the north and south of the Village. The Sleeping Bear Heritage Trail is a hard-surfaced, non-motorized, multi-use trail that runs almost twenty-two (22) miles to the north from the Village. A future segment of the trail is planned to go south of Empire. The Michigan Shore to Shore Trail, created by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Forest Service, is a hiking and equestrian trail. The trail spans between Empire on Lake Michigan and Oscoda on Lake Huron. The following recommendations were developed to focus our efforts on ways to promote those existing trails and improving non-motorized traffic patterns within the Village.

Trails Recommendations

- TRL 1. Connect Heritage Trail north of the village to Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore Headquarters and Visitor Center. Collaborate with the Leelanau Conservancy for possible northern M-22 crossing to Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore Headquarters and Visitor Center.
- TRL 2. Establish a trail along the east side of South Bar Lake to Johnson Park and Front Street
- TRL 3. Collaborate with the Michigan Trail Riders Association to explore options for improving cooperation along the Michigan Shore to Shore Trail. This may include signage (wayfinding and trailhead), amenities and space within the village for riders and hikers.
- TRL 4. Establish a route from the village to the Empire Bluff Trail

Traffic Calming

- CALM 1. Install wide crosswalk markings and advance stop bars at key intersections.
 - CALM 2. Install advance warning signs (not beacon signals) in advance of unsignalized crossings along M-22.
 - CALM 3. Install “Yield to Pedestrian” signs at key crossings downtown, like at Union Street and LaRue Street or at entrances to the village’s core (*suggested to re-word*)
 - CALM 4. Add traffic calming features along M-22 (landscaping, lighting, pathways/sidewalks, improved crosswalks, etc.) north and south of M-72.
 - CALM 5. Reduce speed limit to 35 mph, with associated “Reduced Speed Limit” signs at village limits.
 - CALM 6. Apply traffic calming, as discussed above, on residential streets to prevent cut-through traffic. ~~Consider allowing private roads to be narrower than public roads.~~
 - CALM 7. Install landscaping and street trees at side street intersections.
 - CALM 8. Improve crosswalks at side street locations.
- (REMOVE BOTH PHOTOS)

Entryways

- ENT 1. Add distances to downtown and beach on entrance signs
- ENT 2. Require new construction to bury power lines
- ENT 3. Develop a downtown gateway at the east end of Front Street that includes landscaped areas, signage, physical features, or a combination of elements that will both improve the aesthetic, draw visitors, and calm traffic.

Public Parking Recommendations

- PPARK 1. Convert parallel parking on Lake Street to angled (adds approximately 9 spaces)
- PPARK 2. Organize future parking lot use in the vicinity of Lake Street/Front Street
- PPARK 3. Acquire additional long-term public parking lots (as shown on the Vehicular Ways Map, page 17).
- PPARK 4. Where long-term parking locations are secured through lease or purchase, they should be organized to maximize parking spaces.
- PPARK 5. Conduct a long-term parking study that considers purchase or lease of land for municipal parking lots, accommodations for deliveries, short-term v. long-term parking, and handicap accessibility.
- ~~• PPARK 6. AND ILLUSTRATION~~
- PPARK 7. Continue short term parking limits on certain downtown parking locations, such as near the Post Office: (keep illustration)

Beach Parking Recommendations

- BPARK 1. *Continue* modest charge for beach parking.
- BPARK 2. Maintain some dedicated resident parking (keep, previously struck)
- BPARK 3. *Maintain* direction signs to overflow beach parking.

Access Management Recommendations

- AMPOL 1. Plan for and adequately regulate parking in village right-of-ways.
- AMPOL 2. Implement corridor improvements as shown to the right. (Image will need to be updated to remove arrow and “consider a pedestrian connection...”)
- AMPOL 3. Develop policies like the following to manage the location, spacing and design of new driveways:
 - ❖ Maintain proper sight distance at road intersections.
 - ❖ Driveways need to be adequately spaced from intersections and other driveways (on both sides of the street) to assist in the reduction of turning movement conflicts.
 - ❖ Providing connections between parking lots and shared driveways where feasible, limits the number of turning movements onto the main roadway and reduces the potential for crashes.

Bicycle Policy Recommendations

- BPOL 1. Implement Complete Streets in future development of pedestrian and vehicular planning.
- ~~• BPOL 2. Encourage new developments to install sidewalks:~~
 - ~~❖ Residential streets on at least one side~~
 - ~~❖ Major Roads on both sides~~

NEW BUSINESS

ZO Section 3.19 Sidewalks and ZO Section 7.08 PUD Updates

Grobbel presented the first draft of amendments for the Sidewalks and PUD sections. Bacon asked if there is a trigger to notify Village Council of a street addition, etc. Grobbel explained there is language already to do so but may need to be fine-tuned. PC members will add draft amendments to the August 3rd agenda.

PUBLIC COMMENTS – None.

COMMITTEE AND VILLAGE COUNCIL REPORTS – Bacon reported that the DNR Waterways Grant has been awarded to the Village for the boat launch area and refinishing of the lighthouse. A grant has been also submitted to receive funds for the reconstruction of Union Street. Bacon informed the PC of new signs in the village and reported that the DPW has completed striping for the season.

ADJOURNMENT – There being no further business, Schous moved that the meeting be adjourned at 9:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Alacia Acton

These minutes were approved at the September 7th, 2021, Village of Empire Planning Commission Regular Meeting.